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A
S E R M O N

Preach'd at the

Church of *St. Mary-le-Bow*,

Before the

S O C I E T I E S

F O R

Reformation of MANNERS,

On *Monday, Jan. 1.* 1704.

K. Hough

By the Right Reverend Father in God, *JOHN*,
Lord Bishop of *Litchfield and Coventry*.

L O N D O N,

Printed for *Jacob Tonson*, within *Grays-Inn Gate*
next *Grays-Inn Lane*. 1705.

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ROM. II. 28, 29.

For he is not a Jew which is one outwardly, neither is that Circumcision which is outward in the Flesh: But he is a Jew which is one inwardly, and Circumcision is that of the Heart, in the Spirit and not in the Letter; whose Praise is not of Men, but of God.

WE are inform'd, in the last Chapter of the *Acts* of the Apostles, that when St. Paul came to Rome, he first address'd himself to the *Jews*, and afterwards to the *Gentiles*; and accordingly the Church there consisted of both, and both had their Parts in this Epistle. But as the *Jews* were moved with Indignation, and forsook him, when he signify'd his Intention of turning to the *Gentiles*,

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tiles, being not able to bear the Thought of any but themselves being made Partakers of the Grace of God through Jesus Christ; so they unreasonably over-valued themselves upon the Privilege of their Birth, imagining the Love of God so peculiarly limited to the Stock of *Abraham*, that others could have no share in or pretence to it, but by becoming his Children in the Legal Sense, and that under this Relation he would look upon them with a favourable Eye, notwithstanding the Obliquity of their Ways. But the Apostle could not suffer this damnable Doctrine to pass without his Censure, and the Confutation of it is in a great measure the Argument of this Epistle. In Chap. 1. Ver. 16. he tells them, that the Gospel was *the Power of God to Salvation, to every one that believed, to the Jew indeed first*, (he must first be Preach'd to) but not exclusive of the *Gentile*. That *the Wrath of God was reveal'd against the Gentile World*, because they sinn'd against the Law of Nature, did not worship their Creator according to those Ideas of his Infinite Power and Goodness, which unprejudic'd Reason, and the visible Works of his Hands, suggested: Neither did they govern their Lives by those Rules

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Rules and Maxims which in their Hearts they were convinc'd ought to be the Measure of their Actions. And if the *Gentiles* thus brought themselves under Condemnation, shall the *Jews*, who liv'd as they did, expect better Treatment? By no means. The *Gentiles* did those things which they never could justify to their Reason, or reflect upon without reproaching themselves; and therefore they deservedly fell under the Wrath of God. But the *Jew* was inexcusable; he had a plain Law from Heaven, whereby he might arrive at Certainty in all Cases; whereas the wisest and best of the Heathens could often go no farther than Probability and Conjecture: And if he wickedly perverted or misapply'd this Rule, nay if he impudently transgress against the clearest Precepts, 'twas in vain for him to boast that he had the Custody of it, and was strict in the Observance of exterior Ceremonies: It was given to rule the Heart and the Mind, and where it had not that Effect, serv'd only to enhance his Guilt, and heighten his Condemnation. *Behold thou art called a Jew*, (art descended from the Friend of God, of that Nation which he has vouchsafed to know above all the Families upon Earth) *and*

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restest in the Law, (the Rites and Performances of it) and makest thy boast of God, (that he is the Author of thy Religion, thy Governor and thy Ruler, by his own peculiar Choice) and knowest his Will, and approvest the things that are most excellent; and art confident that thou thyself art a Guide to the blind, a Light to them which are in Darknes, an Instructor of the foolish, a Teacher of Babes, which hast the Form of Knowledge and of Truth in the Law. (See here the mighty Conceit they had of themselves, and their despicable Opinion of other People.) But the Apostle is prepar'd to humble 'em, and turns all these boasted Advantages upon 'em to their Confusion. Thou that teachest another, teachest thou not thy self? Thou that makest thy Boast of the Law, through breaking the Law dishonourest thou God? Circumcision verily profiteth if thou keep the Law, but if thou art a Breaker of the Law, thy Circumcision is made Uncircumcision in the Effects, (the Benefit of it is lost;) for he is not a Jew (one of God's select and peculiar People) who is one outwardly, (in Profession only) neither is that Circumcision (in the Truth and Reality, and in the Account of God) which is outwardly
in

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the Flesh: But he is a Jew who is one inwardly, (who labours to get the Mastery over his corrupt Inclinations and Affections,) and Circumcision is that of the Heart, in the Spirit and not in the Letter; (in the Conformity of our Minds to the Precepts of the Law, not in the bare Performance of external Rites;) whose Praise is not of Men (they being able to judge only according to outward Appearance) but of God, who knows the inward Intention and Disposition of the Soul.

The Church observes this Day, in Memory of our Saviour's Condescension to this Rite, and therefore the Apostle had Authority from the greatest Example, as well as Reason to aver, that it was not a useless or indifferent Ceremony: *Circumcision verily profited*; it was the Seal of the Covenant, the only Means whereby they could become Legal Members of the Visible Church, and have a Right vested in 'em to the great Blessings and Prerogatives God had entail'd upon it. But then it was Conditional; *if thou keep the Law.* 'Twas no small Advantage to be brought out of Darkness into Light, out of a State of Enmity into a State of Reconciliation with God; and to have Happiness set before 'em in a full View,

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View, with infallible Directions how to approach and possess it. But if a Man will stop here, and make no farther Progress; nay, if he turns back into all the destructive Errors of his former Ways, it were better he had never seen the Light; than thus to sin against it: For *he is not a Jew which is one outwardly, &c.* Which Words, with what I have just now said, we may apply to the Christian Church, and raise from them these Inferences.

First, That a true Member of the Church must have Admission into it in such Form and Manner, and by such proper Officers as God has ordain'd: For the Benefits of the Gospel now (as of the Law before) are federal, and whoever expects to share in 'em, must enter into this Compact with Christ, in the Ways and Methods which he has instituted. But then,

Secondly, It is not enough, when we are in the Church, barely to accommodate our selves to the outward Rights and Forms of it; for this makes only an outward Christian, and he who is no more is none at all in Reality: But we must apply our Hearts diligently to obey all the Commandments of God, and demonstrate the Power
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of the Gospel in the Integrity of our Lives. There is a

Third Inference the Text affords us, That a conscientious and upright Son of the Church may very probably have the Mortification to see a formal Professor valu'd and esteem'd before him, for *his Praise is not of Men*. Which cannot be suppos'd to be spoken of Men in so hard a Sense, as if the Apostle thought they were inclin'd to be more favourable to Appearance than Sincerity, but it results from the Nature of the thing, the Necessity that lyes upon us from the Principles of Equity, to judge from what we see of what we do not see, and to conclude, that a Man who seems unblamable and Praise-worthy in all Respects, really is so. But this often leads us into Mistake; for he who endeavours to recommend himself to Men keeps Them always in his Eye, is nicely scrupulous and critical, and never off his Guard where he perceives himself observ'd, and therefore seldom fails to gain his End and Design. But he who studies to please God looks always to Him, is frequently carry'd beyond lesser Matters, whilst greater are in view, and never solicitous to give a Gloss and Varnish to his Actions,

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if they will but bear the substantial Test: Yet this too easily occasions him to be misunderstood and misinterpreted; it subjected the Apostles, nay our Blessed Lord himself, to the most shameful Reproaches and most inhuman Usage; and it were enough to damp the Courage of a very well resolv'd Christian, but that he knows there is a

Fourth Inference to be made from the Text, (which is) That he is to look for his Approbation elsewhere, and his Reward from another Hand. *His Praise is of God.* Of God, who looks thro' all outward Actions to the End and Intention of 'em, and judges not the Face and exterior Deportment, but the Heart.

I presume the Time might be spent not un-
usefully in a farther Enlargement upon these Particulars, but considering the Purpose of our present Meeting, I think my self oblig'd to use 'em rather as the Occasion than the Subject of what I intend to say, by applying them to those worthy Soldiers of Christ; who have list'd themselves a second time under his Banner, against the World, the Flesh, and the Devil. We all did it in Baptism, when we solemnly profess'd and engag'd our selves to live in a State of irreconcilable Enmity
with

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with 'em to our Lives end; and we are too easily brought to flatter our selves that we have discharg'd this Duty, when we have been faithful to our selves and our own spiritual Interest, when we have driven the Enemy from our own Doors, and made good our Defence against his Assaults: But those Persons certainly take the Duty in its true and full Latitude, whose Zeal carries them to seek him out, and to attack him where-ever he is to be found, to rescue the Weak and the Deluded, the Captive and the Prisoner out of his Hand. Grounding my self therefore upon the infallible Doctrine of the Text, that it is not being a Member of the best Church in the World, where the Sacraments are rightly administer'd, and the Truth taught without mixture of Errors; where the Faith is sincere, the Prayers devout, and the whole Oeconomy edifying; taking it, I say, for granted, that it is not being Member of such a Church; nay, that it is not an exact outward Conformity to such a Church that will avail to Salvation, without Purity, and Sanctity, and Moral Honesty; I may truly say, that the Societies for Reformation of Manners, whose difficult Endeavours are all

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directed to this only and blessed End, are highly serviceable to God, and to the Church: And I shall endeavour to prove it in these following Particulars; by shewing,

First, That their Labours have a direct Tendency to make the Preaching and Ministry of the Clergy successful.

Secondly, That they help the Civil Magistrate in the Discharge of his Duty. And,

Thirdly, That single Persons would be able to make little Progress in such a Work, (how good soever their Intentions might be,) unless they acted by Concert and mutual Agreement, whereby they might be able to strengthen each other in opposing the Hardships they are sure to Encounter with. And,

First, I say, the Labours of the Societies for Reformation of Manners, have a direct Tendency to make the Preaching and Ministry of the Clergy successful: *The Priest's Lips*, says *Malachi*, *should preserve Knowledge, and the People should seek the Law at his Mouth*; for he is, as our Church, in her incomparable Office of Ordination, expresses it, a Messenger, Watchman and Steward of the Lord, to teach and to premonish,

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monish, to feed and provide for the Lord's Family, to seek for Christ's Sheep that are dispers'd abroad, and for his Children, who are in the midst of this naughty World, that they may be sav'd through Christ for ever. Here is Business of the greatest moment, and which requires no mean Abilities in the Performance; to instruct the Ignorant, admonish the Negligent, reprove the Criminal, and correct the Obstinate; to struggle against Principalities and Powers, against Mens corrupt Inclinations and Passions, against evil Customs and wicked Habits, unreasonable Prepossessions and groundless Prejudices: And yet an honest and good Pastor would hope, with the Blessing of God, to surmount these Difficulties, if he could but come to grapple with them. But how shall he Preach to him that will not hear? how shall he reprove the Scornor that shuns him? or punish the Reprobate that despises the Censures of the Church? What will he care to be cut off from our Communion that has forsaken it before? If that dreadful Sentence drew down from Heaven (as in the Infancy of the Church) some Signal Judgment upon the Head of him against whom it was denounc'd, one

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would hope such a desperate Person might be awaken'd and feel, tho' he would not be brought to hear of his Danger. But in these latter Ages God has not appear'd thus visibly in Vindication of that Authority he has given to the Church; and as ill Subjects slight Human Laws that are not enforc'd with some Penalty, so Reprobate Christians despise and laugh at Penalties, which they do not see follow'd with immediate Execution; and since this is the Case, what melancholy Reflections may one suppose a good Parish Priest, especially in this great City, to have, who watches anxiously over the Souls of his People, sees 'em on every side drawn away, caught and entangl'd in the Allurements of Sin, and yet finds himself want Strength and Power to bring 'em back? Do not we think such an one would joyfully receive, and thankfully acknowledge the Offers of Assistance? Would he not think it a Blessing to have some in his Parish, who would make it their Business to find out the Resorts of the Lewd and Profligate, the Intemperate and the Irreligious, to bring 'em to Shame and Punishment for their Follies, and then bring 'em to a better Life by their Examples,

ples, their sober Behaviour, and constant Attendance upon the Ordinances of the Church? How would it rejoice his Heart to see his Stragglers thus brought home, who had broke loose from his Paternal Care, and whom he had deplor'd as lost and dead?

Politicians deliver it as a Maxim which Princes should never fail to observe, That they confer Acts of Grace, and Mercy, and Beneficence with their own Hands; but where Rigour and Severity are requisite, there to let their Ministers be the Executioners, and, as much as may be, the reputed Authors: For we all love those that do us Good, and have a natural Aversion to those that hurt us, tho' they be but the Instruments of another's Will. The Rule is undoubtedly wise in the State, and the Church of Rome has that Opinion of it, that in her most barbarous Cruelties she never fails to put on this Veil and Disguise; the poor condemn'd Heretick is deliver'd over to the secular Power, she cannot touch him without Tenderness and Compassion, nay she prays and conjures the Civil Magistrate not to hurt him, when at the same time she knows he dare not spare tho' it were in his Inclination,

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nation, and her Officers decently attend at the Execution: This is such a shameful, such a provoking piece of Hypocrisie, as never was acted amongst Men but in that Communion; yet she serves her self of it, and multitudes of deluded People are carry'd into the Opinion that she sees 'em perish with Reluctancy. But the Rule practis'd within due Limits is approv'd by the common Suffrage of Mankind, every body would be understood to act in his own Person when he does a good Office, and where he can fairly decline it is willing enough to leave the ungrateful part to others; and we of the Clergy should above all others be pleas'd when we are wholly employ'd on the kind, the peaceable, and the forgiving side. Our Business is to win People to their Duty by all the Arts that Pity and good Nature, and an hearty Concern for their Welfare can suggest, and 'tis happy when we are under no Obligation to Disgust, which often renders our best Attempts fruitless; but if these generous Societies did not come in to our Relief, it would be an unavoidable part of our Duty. There is a Necessity that Vice should be discourag'd and restrain'd, and where Admonition will not be heard,

heard, Severity and Punishment must take place; but if this be promoted from another Quarter, we are still the more at Liberty to pursue the gentler Methods, and in a more likely way to succeed in our Labours. But then,

Secondly, These Societies help the Civil Magistrate in the Discharge of his Duty. He *bears not the Sword in vain*, 'tis his business to be a *Terror to evil Doers*, as it is to give Protection and *Encouragement to those that do well*. But the former Part he can but lamely exercise, without the Assistance of those who will be at the Pains to find out and prosecute Offenders. 'Tis a common thing for Magistrates to have their Ears fill'd with Complaints, and every body is ready to call upon 'em to punish this or that Delinquent; but when they set about the Business, and look for Evidence, they frequently find themselves disappointed, then an unseasonable Tenderness takes place, and the Complainant repents that he has brought a Person in Danger, of whom he is willing to hope better Things for the future: Or he bethinks himself that the Name of an Informer has an odious Sound, and tho' the Person indeed be very bad, yet he cannot

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not bear the Reproach of his being brought to suffer thro' his means. And thus it comes to pass that the Offenders many times see the Face of a Judge with Impunity, and the Judge by frequent Baffles is dishearten'd and grows distrustful. It is a wonderful thing that any Government should suffer the Name of Informer to carry Infamy along with it, his Pretence is always the Service of the Publick, his Report is judg'd of by the Probability of the thing, and the Evidence that supports it; he becomes obnoxious to the Malice and Revenge of the Accus'd and their Friends, and if he be not upheld by the Authority to which he resorts, who can look for Informations and Discoveries for the future? And yet Coldness and Distrust usually receives 'em, and Slight and Contempt are sure to follow 'em. It will be said perhaps, that false and worthless Villains have too often supply'd the Office, and therefore the ill Character will stick to all that take it up; but as that is not just, so Reason of State can less approve it. But this cannot be the Case with our pious and good-natur'd Informers, they have no Interest or Passion to excite 'em, no Prejudice or Spleen to be gratify'd; they love
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the Persons they offend, accuse in order to reclaim, and bring Men to moderate Punishments, that they may deliver 'em from utter Ruin. And this, in the Consequences of it, will serve the Magistrate a more agreeable way than by presenting Criminals to his Justice, for it will lighten his Cares, and shorten his Labours. The Retreats of Vice being frequently disturb'd, it cannot settle and take root; the Breath of Inquisitive Authority blasts it, and the Strength of Temptations is ballanc'd by contrary Fears and Apprehensions.

It was an Observation long since, and pass'd without Contradiction, that the last Age was still the worst; the Preacher took it for granted, *Say not thou what is the Cause that the former Days were better than these, for thou dost not enquire wisely concerning this.* He seems not to question the Truth of the Fact, but thinks not fit to enquire into the Reason; but possibly it might not be so, nor might that be his Meaning; for we do not find, from the Account of past Times, either at home or abroad, that those that went before us have very much reason to value themselves above us upon that Account;

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but however that Question may be determin'd at present, I hope we have sufficient Ground to believe, that the next Age will be better than this. Those sincere, and upright, and hearty Endeavours which, in this great City, and many others of this Kingdom, are carry'd on for the Reformation of Manners, and which, by our Example, are promoted and begun in many Parts of *Europe*, will in time, with God's Blessing, give a new Face to the Moral World; but especially that most charitable Provision that is made for the Education of poor destitute Children of both Sexes, in the Principles of Religion and Moral Honesty, and in such Arts and Employments as may make them useful Members of the Common-wealth, will have such excellent and visible Effects in the next Age, that the Children now unborn will rise up and bless the Contrivers and Promoters of so Noble a Work, so extensively beneficial to the whole Race of Mankind. For the Rules and Precepts which Children receive will stick by 'em; and, tho' they may be sometimes neglected, will not be forgotten. There is a mighty Force in Custom, and almost every Body is under the Tyranny of it,

it, for how few are there that have not contracted some Habits in their manner and method of living, which they find inconvenient, but cannot shake off? How many have, by meer accident, unaccountably fallen into the use of Gestures, Phrases and Words, which have become habitual before they were known to have Possession? Men have been surpriz'd with the first Advertisements of 'em, but found 'em fix'd, and, tho' convinc'd of their Absurdity, knew not how to get rid of 'em. For what has been long done comes to be done mechanically, of course it follows the Season or Occasion that us'd to introduce it, without Thought, or Reflection, or previous Determination; and if this be the Case in Things indifferent, nay, in Things that are many times foolish and absurd, how much stronger is it where Care and Design are employ'd, where proper Seasons are taken, and all suitable Means us'd to insinuate and inculcate? Impressions made upon the tender Bark, grow up and encrease, and enlarge themselves as the Plant does; and a young Plant, in a skilful Hand, is turn'd and dispos'd into any Bent or Figure, and being some time kept to it con-

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tinues so inflexible. The Paths of Industry, Honesty and Virtue may at first perhaps seem unpleasant and difficult, but Dexterity and good Address will remove Obstructions, or the Strength of Expectation help to surmount them. A fair View of a glorious distant Prospect will invite People to begin the Journey, tho' they may not tread so easily, and they will quickly feel that the farther they go the better able they are to proceed, Faintness and Wearisomness are every Day less than other, 'till at last they continue on with Pleasure and Delight, and are in no Danger of being stopp'd or diverted. Children are growing up to be Members of the Common-wealth, either very useful or very pernicious; the hopes of the coming Generation depends upon 'em, and the State must either flourish or sink in proportion as they are qualify'd and dispos'd to support it. If they are season'd with the Principles of Religion, Virtue and common Honesty, are brought up to Labour and Industry, and taught to judge aright of what is Base and Mean, what is Reputable and Praise-worthy, they will certainly prove faithful Subjects to their Prince, true to the Honour

nour and Interest of their Country, stedfast in the Faith, good Neighbours to each other, and will refuse no Pains or Danger in the Publick Service, nor be drawn off from it by any private or sinister Consideration: But where the Education of Youth is neglected, we have nothing to look for but the reverse of this; People without Principles have Pleasure only, and private Interest to attend; and if such at any time become serviceable to the State, it is purely by accident, as the Publick happens to fall in with their own particular Concerns, but their Country has no hold upon 'em beyond that of a feeble Inclination, which will never be able to keep its Ground in the Heart, when it is oppos'd by stronger Passions. I come now to the

Third Particular, That single Persons would be able to make but little Progress in this Work of Reformation, how good soever their Intentions might be, unless they acted by Concert and mutual Agreement, whereby they might be able to strengthen each other in opposing the Difficulties they are sure to Encounter with. It is not our present Business to enquire from what Causes, or by what Steps the mighty Tide
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of Vice, Irreligion, and Atheism arose, which has appear'd so visible in our Days; but it occasion'd more melancholy Reflections to the wise and sober part of the Nation, than all the Dangers that did or could threaten us from abroad; they saw the Fatal Tendency it had to the Destruction of our Religion and Civil Liberties, and almost despair'd of being able to stop a Torrent that rose so high, and flow'd in so fast upon them. The late King and Queen, of Blessed Memory, took notice of it in their Proclamations, and call'd for the Aid of their Subjects, of all Degrees and Conditions, to assist them in the Enterprising this difficult Work. Our present Glorious Queen has done the same, and, under their Auspicious Protection and Influence, many good and virtuous Persons have form'd themselves into Societies for that purpose; and God, who stirr'd up their Hearts to the Work, has bless'd and caus'd it to prosper in their Hands. It may modestly be said, they have not only put a stop to the Enemy, check'd the growth and increase of Lewdness and Prophaneness, but gain'd Ground; and it may, with great probability of Truth, be affirm'd, that all their
good

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good Inclinations and Endeavours would be ineffectual, if they were not carry'd on by a joint and united Force.

Vice, in its first beginnings, creeps low, and is timorous, steals abroad in Disguise, seeks for Privacy and Retirement, and dwindles and shrinks before Superior Virtue; but when it grows to a Head 'tis daring and impudent, scorns Advice, and hates Reproof, and where it is not subdu'd never fails to insult; nay, it comes at last to endeavour to put Virtue out of Countenance, to lessen its Character, and out-face its Authority; and when it is thus in its high Career, it must be a very vigorous Opposition that will not be over-born by it. If the Young appear against it, they are told their Passions and Inclinations call 'em to that side, and if they will not be prevail'd upon to go over, they are laugh'd at as Fools that want Sense and Spirit. If the Old concern themselves 'tis because they are superannuated, the Grave are call'd Hypocrites, and the Religious Madmen. In short, where Sin and Wickedness abound, Reason and Advice, let 'em come from whom they will, are not likely to find Place; the Magistrate indeed is still able

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to make himself be felt, but who shall accuse and charge the Criminal? This, as I said before, is not to be done by particular Persons, who will certainly be tir'd out with the Discouragements and Disappointments they will meet with, how warm soever their Zeal may be: For the Wicked are in a profest Confederacy; when any one of the guilty Tribe is struck at, the whole is alarm'd; they fear nothing under Heaven, (they would have us believe nor above it neither) but the Hand of Authority, and therefore he that shall endeavour to bring 'em under it, may be assur'd to be charg'd by their whole Posse, with Scorns and Reproaches, Slanders and Invectives, Threatnings and ill Usage; every thing that may work upon his Fear, his Shame, or his Interest, and deter him and others from the like Attempts for the future. But when good and upright Men enter into Combinations for the Common Cause of Religion, and the Principles of Morality, they make themselves a Match for the Enemy, whose Devilish Artillery will then have little or no Effect, for People will perceive themselves not to be hurt by it, when they have a Party, and Friends to go to; they will find it
does

does not lessen them in their Esteem; nay, they will find it cements and renders their Union more entire, sows the Seeds of Love and Friendship amongst 'em; brings them to make that of every individual Brother a common Cause, and animates them to fresh and more considerable Encounters. Again, when the Friends to Virtue draw together under her Banners, put themselves in a posture of Defence, consult and deliberate what is to be done for her Service, where the Enemy is weakest, and may best be attack'd, and where they themselves lye openest to his Assaults, there is an Appearance and Discovery of Strength and Force on her side, that was not seen or believ'd before; for there is this mighty Difference between the Two Parties, that the One is noisie, presumptuous and conceited, full of vain Boasts and insolent Pretensions, and always endeavouring, by an outward shew, to conceal its want of inward Strength; whereas the other is calm and silent, steady and uniform, and unaffected; and 'tis impossible to compute its true Force till you see it in the Field. Then it appears, blessed be God, that the Tents of Wickedness were neither so numerous nor so

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formidable as it was apprehended ; and how much soever they may pretend to have encreas'd and extended themselves, there remains a sufficient Power to reduce them. Let those therefore, that have drawn themselves forth to this Service, go on, in God's Name, go on and prosper, the Lord is on your side, you are certain to have him for your Help and Defence ; and, which does not always happen, you have Man's Approbation. Reason and Judgment, even where they are not in Conjunction with Grace, give in their Suffrage to you ; they know that Liberty and Property cannot long subsist under a general Licentiousness and Disorder ; and what Follies soever Men may have of their own, or how much soever they may be inclin'd to indulge 'em, yet they know their pernicious Consequences so well, that whilst they have any Remains of Sense and Understanding, they will never be content to give 'em a general License. Nothing is more observable than that Parents, who have liv'd in greatest Liberty, keep their Children under the strictest Restraint ; which implies a tacit Condemnation of themselves, and that 'tis better for the Children not to follow
their

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their Courses. And we may draw from it this certain Conclusion, That, excepting only the profligate and the abandon'd, every body would have Reformation take place in every Breast besides his own. Go on therefore, and compleat this most beneficial Service to Mankind; you have already conquer'd the greatest Hardships, and the Way will be every Day more plain before you. The Beginnings of an Attempt are always the most difficult; then People are raw and unexperienc'd in their Businesses, and are often foil'd for want of Dexterity; then the strongest Efforts are made on the other Side, and the Out-guards and Avenues are strengthen'd against 'em: But when once the Lines are broken, the Enemy falls into Confusion, and the rest is a cheap and easie Conquest. But remember, my Brethren, that you are fighting the Lord's Battels, and must therefore, above all things, be careful to use no other Weapons but such as he has put into your Hands; no private Ends must mix themselves in this Affair, nor may any Means be us'd but such as the Word of God approves: All must be carry'd on with the Spirit of Meekness and Prudence, and to that only

only End of reducing Men from the Error of
their Ways to the Service of God, and the Use
of their Country. And, if you thus justify your
Commission, and approve your selves to be the
Children of God, you need not fear to encount-
er his Enemies: For to apply what Haman's
Friends foretold him, *If ye be of the Seed of the
faithful, before whom they have begun to fall,
they shall not prevail, they shall certainly fall be-
fore you.*

Which God, of his infinite Mercy to them and
us, bring to pass in his good time, for the
Merits of his Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord
Amen, Amen.

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